

REMARKS

Summary

Applicants have amended the Abstract and Claim 1 to overcome formal objections thereto, added the features of allowable Claim 2 to Claim 1, cancelled allowable Claim 2 and rejected Claim 12, and redrafted allowable Claims 3/1 as new Claim 13. Therefore, the application is now in allowable form.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-11, and 13 are pending. Claims 2 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1 and 3-13 have been amended for reasons unrelated to patentability to improve their form. In addition, Claim 1 has been amended to overcome a formal objection thereto and to include the features of allowable Claim 2. Claim 13, which is a redrafting of allowable Claim 3/1 in independent form, has been added. Claims 1 and 13 are independent.

Requested Action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objections and rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Request for Consideration of March 22, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the documents cited in the March 22, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement and initial and return the Information Disclosure Citation Form that accompanied this Information Disclosure Statement.

Abstract Objection

The abstract is objected to because of its length. In response, Applicants have amended the Abstract so that it has between 50 and 150 words, as required in the Office Action.

Formal Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 12 are objected to for minor informalities therein. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, Claim 1 has been amended to address the points raised by the Examiner and Claim 12 has been canceled without prejudice, thereby rendering the objections moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 2, 3, 4/2, 5/2, 6/2, 7/2, 8/2, 9/2, 10/2 and 11/2 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims from which they depend. In response, Applicants have added the features of Claim 2 to Claim 1 and have redrafted Claim 3/1 in independent form as new Claim 13.

Substantive Rejection

Claims 1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as being anticipated by the patent to Isobe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,324,370).

Response to Substantive Rejection

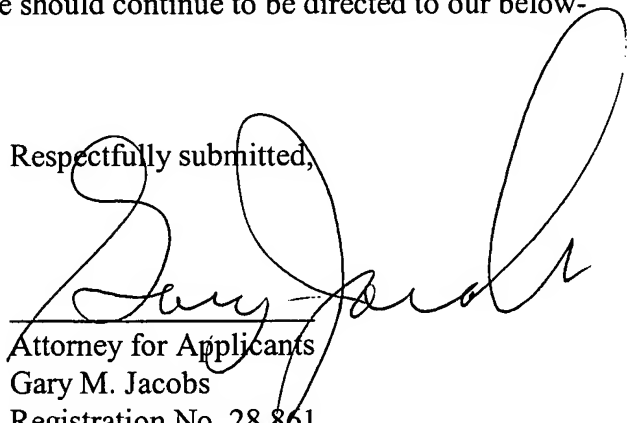
In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of allowable Claim 2, Claim 2 and rejected independent Claim 12 have been canceled without prejudice, and allowable dependent Claim 3/1 has been redrafted as new Claim 13, thereby rendering all of the claims allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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